

Charles Hays House
(Hays-Kiser House)
834 Reeves Road
Antioch
Davidson County
Tennessee

HABS No. TENN-65

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. TENN-65

CHARLES HAYS HOUSE (HAYS-KISER HOUSE)

Location: 834 Reeves Road, Antioch Vicinity, Davidson County, Tennessee.

Present Owners and Occupants: Mr. and Mrs. John Kiser

Present Use: Dwelling

Statement of Significance: This late eighteenth-century, two-story brick residence is an unornamented version of the Federal style that was frequently employed by the first generation of settlers in Tennessee.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: c. 1795
2. Architect: Unknown. The house was built for Charles Hays of Sampson County, North Carolina. According to family descendants, Charles's father, John Hays, came from Sampson County to Tennessee with skilled workmen and stayed to supervise construction of the house until it was completed. It was probably completed prior to the marriage of Charles Hays to Ann Blackman in 1797.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The original owner was Charles Hays. Upon his death in 1854, the house passed to a grandson. In 1870 it was sold to Peter Rieves; it remained in the hands of Rieves descendants until 1966, when it was acquired by Mr. and Mrs. John Kiser.
4. Alterations and additions: The original structure was of Flemish-bonded brick with white painted wooden trim. In 1797, it consisted of one large and one smaller room on each of its two floors, with a one-room ell to the north of the smaller, first-floor room. Some time later, a room above the ell was added, opening onto an upstairs gallery which was added at the same time. In 1894, the gallery was removed and the ell was filled in with a two-story frame addition. Now gone is the kitchen-dining room building, which was originally west of the house and connected to it by a louvered passage. This passage was sometimes referred to as a ballroom, as it was 60 feet long.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

The original owner, Charles Hays (1777-1854), is referred to in Clayton's History of Davidson County as "a Christian gentleman and founder of the Baptist Church at Antioch." He was a generous benefactor to the community and a large landholder, owning some 2,500 acres of fertile Mill Creek land. He gave land for a school, for the Baptist Church, and for the Antioch Temperance Society. He is buried on the property of the Charles Hays House.

C. Sources of Information:

Brumbaugh, Thomas B.; Strayhorn, Martha I.; and Gore, Gary G.; eds. Architecture of Middle Tennessee. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1974.

Clayton, W. W. History of Davidson County, Tennessee, with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches of Its Prominent Men. Philadelphia: J. W. Lewis & Co., 1880.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This is an example of the late Federal style frequently employed by the first generation of Tennessee settlers.
2. Condition of fabric: Excellent inside and out.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: This house is about 36 feet wide (three-bay front). It has two stories and a basement. The L-shaped original block was filled in with a frame addition in 1894.
2. Foundations: Smooth ashlar stone blocks.
3. Wall construction, finish, and color: Brick masonry laid in Flemish bond in the main block; frame with clapboards, painted white, in the 1894 addition.
4. Porches: On the west side of the main block there is a tetrastyle porch having square columns and a gable roof with simple cornice and returns.
5. Chimneys: There is an outside two-story brick chimney on both the east and the west gable end of the main block.

6. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The main doorway, located in the center of the south facade, is a round-arched opening with a wooden surround and a stone threshold. It contains double wooden doors--each leaf having five moulded panels arranged in three tiers--with a fanlight above. Four limestone steps lead from a brick walk to the doorway.
- b. Windows and shutters: The windows in the main block are nine-over-nine-light double-hung wooden sash. The windows in the frame addition are in general six-over-six-light double-hung sash on the first floor and four-over-four-light double-hung sash on the second floor. Basement windows visible on the main facade have three lights. Green shutters (louvered) are a replacement of the originals.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: There is a gable roof with simple cornice and returns on the main block, and a shed roof on the 1894 frame addition.
- b. Dormers: None.

8. Hardware: The original iron shutter-keepers and boot scrapers remain.

C. Description of Interior:

The house is L-shaped with three rooms--one large and two small--on each floor. In 1894 the L was filled in with a frame addition. The main entrance on the south opens directly into the living room, which is located on the southeast corner. The woodwork throughout the house is quite sophisticated, employing the "chip, gouge, and drill" technique of carving associated with German workmen. The woodwork in the master bedroom on the second floor preserves an entire panelled wall with the original finish of graining and staining in imitation of mahogany and green marble.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The house faces south in a setting of lawns, large old maples, magnolias, and foundation plantings of box and privet.

2. Walks, enclosures: A brick walk laid in herringbone pattern leads from the former driveway--now Reeves Road--to the front steps.

Prepared by John W. Kiser
Architectural Historian
July 1973 and 1974

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were made during the summer of 1971 as part of a cooperative project of the National Park Service, the Tennessee Historical Commission, and the Historic Sites Federation of Tennessee. The work represents the second phase of an extensive recording program to document the historic architecture of Middle Tennessee and involved the recording of structures in the counties surrounding Nashville.

The project was under the direction of James C. Massey, at that time Chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey. Supervisor of the recording team was Professor Roy C. Pledger of Texas A&M University. The team was composed of John W. Kiser, Architectural Historian (University of Tennessee); Daryl P. Fortier, Architect (University of Minnesota); and student architects Gilbert M. Glaubinger (Rhode Island School of Design), Steve P. Roberts (Ohio State University), and Barry S. Williams (Texas A&M University). Photographs were made by Jack E. Boucher, HABS staff photographer. Additional information was supplied by Mr. Kiser in 1973 and 1974.